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Before *Jihadists* There Were Anarchists: A Failed Case of Transnational Violence

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With the wave of violent jihadist activities in recent years, the world's attention has shifted away from a traditional prioritizing of state forms of formal violence toward one focusing on an apparently "new" phenomenon of transnational violence. Yet transnational violence itself is not a new phenomenon; it in fact precedes international, state-centric violence. For reasons related to gaps or defects within the state system or to surges in the capacities of individuals and societies, transnational violence has periodically made attempts to regain its primary position. Prior to the violent jihadists, the last of these efforts was that of the late-nineteenth-century Anarchists. This article looks at the dynamics of the Anarchists's failure as part of a transnational violence continuum, using a framework based on their autonomy, representation, and influence. The results provide an historical example against which future studies about the current episode of transnational violence may be compared.

The Transnational Comeback

Conflict and violence clearly did not emerge with the creation of states. Rather, in a pre-state context, major examples of conflict and violence were by nature more "transnational," in the sense that they largely occurred at the individual and societal levels. With the introduction and the consolidation of "statehood," the primary sources and targets of violence came to be states, and the predominant forms of violence became "international" or state-level. This overshadowing also did not mean, however, that with the emergence of states, the individual and societal examples of transnational violence disappeared. Significant episodes have always been present, and reflected both in the form of civil insurgencies that emerge within states but very often have cross-border (transnational) spill-over,¹ or, rarely but often very forcefully, in the form of globally aspiring violent movements. Pre-modern examples of such transnational violent movements and actors might include the Hashashin of the eleventh–thirteenth centuries or historical pirates—who as early as the first century B.C. were threatening the commerce of the entire Roman Empire. From the modern era, there are the Anarchists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the recent phenomenon of a loosely composed *jihadist* terrorist network generally referred to as "Al Qaeda." Whatever the form, examples of transnational violence have

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long existed—although suppressed or at least attempted to be suppressed by states and via international activities.

Transnational activity, both peaceful and violent, tends to become more prominent at certain times. These times include eras in which international, state-to-state confrontation seems to ease up, for example, during the Concert of Europe, the Interwar Period, or following the end of the Cold War, when the number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with transnational dimensions grew rapidly²—as did the number of violent transnational activities and actors. They also include instances when states fail to govern effectively, resulting in conditions that lead to increased transnational activity—again, both peaceful (e.g. Doctors without Borders, the Red Cross, or Amnesty International) and violent (e.g. drug dealers, weapons smugglers, and terrorists). A third factor stimulating increased transnational activity, involves global transformations of knowledge and technology, and the effect these have on making individuals and societies ever more skillful and confident.³ This last factor may lead to a growth in transnational activities because of the effect it has of making available and accessible alternative identities, politics, and loyalties, with which manmade political constructs such as statehood or nationality have a hard time competing. The current era can still be considered as one of post–Cold War transformation, in which international balances are in flux and in which there is a clear rise in individual and societal skills and access to knowledge and technology, and therefore it is not unexpected that one should be seeing a resurgence in transnational activities, including transnational violence.

In looking at the recent major form of transnational violent activity—the *jihadists*—the argument has been made in a popular magazine that to understand them, one needs to look at the Anarchists.⁴ The underlying assumption of this comparison is that the phenomenon being faced now, like the earlier one, is transnational, has global aspirations, and presents an unprecedented degree of violence for its era. Today, most people would obviously see the Anarchists as a failed attempt to take over the global system and model it according to their own ideology, in other words, putting an end to the state-centric system as it was. Surely, understanding the reasons behind this failure could have interesting implications for global politics today. Until now, however, no holistic analysis has been made to show the internal dynamics of this perceived failure. Even more importantly perhaps, it is not clear why, exactly, the Anarchists failed.

A simple response? They failed to organize effectively at a transnational level, and thus to maintain a sustainable, cohesive, and adaptive mechanism capable of carrying out their struggle against the state system. It remains worthwhile and necessary to revisit their case; to try to understand the deeper dynamics of this failure, and in doing so provide a comparative basis for those who hope to understand the potential of today's violent transnational groups to survive and grow. This article explores therefore the Anarchists' failure as an example of transnational violence, with respect to three main issues: their ability to remain autonomous from the state and the state-centric system; their capacity for building up and maintaining a widespread, active body of followers (representation); and their ability to keep up a steady influence on world affairs.

Background: Who were (are) the Anarchists?

Anarchism began as a theory, and became a social movement. The so-called classical period⁵ of Anarchism is most commonly recognized as a movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (roughly 1860–1939), originating in European ideology and politics, although the themes of Anarchist thought can be traced back as far as

ancient China and continue on to the present day, where traces remain in the form of protestors at World Trade Organization (WTO) conferences, websites, publications, isolated experimental communities and schools, widely diverse, local movements such as the Provos in Holland and their effort to place free bicycles around Amsterdam for public use, and in the International Workingmen's Association based in Stockholm.⁶

Anarchism comprises a theory of the individual's relation with society, a theory that not only criticizes the role of authority in current society, but also proscribes social rebellion as the way to achieving a better future. Anarchism encompasses a complex understanding of a non-authoritarian society—a society without an authority imposed from above, yet a society that is not “anarchic” in the sense of being full of madness and chaos. In other words, a society in which the natural laws of a just and equal order are meant to emerge freely from within, without need for leaders or masters. The Anarchists of the classical period were far from agreement on many points. Ideologically, they could be said to have ranged along a spectrum from most individual-based (Stirner's individualist Anarchism) to most broad-based (the Anarcho-Syndicalists), with mutualist (Proudhon), communitarian (Bakunin), and Anarcho-communist (Kropotkin) tendencies lying between. The actions or means associated with each path also varied, from greater reliance on propaganda by word (Proudhon) to propaganda by deed (early Kropotkin, Bakunin), from individualist acts of violence, to mass organized efforts by trade unions (Anarcho-Syndicalists). Nevertheless, it can be agreed that they shared (and still share) a common understanding that the state and state-centric system overall must be replaced by some form of nongovernmental cooperation between individuals.

Concurrent communist or socialist movements cannot be considered as potential examples of early transnational non-state security actors because in their choice to work within the existing state system (regardless of philosophical ideals of an eventual withering away of the state), and in their ultimate taking over of various states, they in fact became state actors. The Anarchists' shared similarities with respect to anti-authoritarianism and to crossing beyond national boundaries, presented a potential non-state threat on a global scale to the overall system of world affairs, and can therefore warrant being looked at in more depth using a non-state actor framework of transnational autonomy, representation, and influence.

Autonomy

If one considers autonomy from the state as a kind of spectrum, it is clear that ideologically, the Anarchists are located far to the right. The most fundamental underpinning of the Anarchist political movement a century ago was a position of anti-stateness, or the “replacement of the authoritarian state by some form of non-governmental cooperation between free individuals.”⁷ Both Anarchist writers and writers with non-authoritarian, Anarchist principles, all shared this view, from Godwin's reminder that “above all we should not forget that government is an evil”⁸ to Stirner's abrupt “We two, the state and I, are enemies.”⁹ Consider as well Kropotkin's assertion of a fundamental opposition between “two currents of thought and action . . . Anarchists and statists,”¹⁰ or Bakunin's forceful words that, “universal peace will be impossible, so long as the present centralized states exist. We must desire their destruction in order that, on the ruins of these forced unions organized from above by right of authority and conquest, there may arise free unions organized from below by the free federations of communes into provinces, of provinces into nations, and of nations into the United States of Europe.”¹¹ This essence of Anarchist

ideology makes Anarchism by nature an inimical threat to a state against which it is focused or against the state-centric system if the movement acquires a transnational influence.

Being “anti-state” and seeking a broad goal of ending national borders did not automatically mean, however, that the Anarchists represented a thoroughly “transnational” movement with no connection to states. At heart, it was a movement that transcended national boundaries—it achieved initial significance as part of the First International¹² and philosophically it was opposed to individual states and to nationalism—but in reality, the movement was inextricably tied up with states and national-specific goals.¹³ Bakunin’s powerful words, for example, on the need to free all peoples and to do so via social revolution, appear in a pamphlet entitled “Appeal to the Slavs,” in which the clear call is for freeing (at least first) Slavic peoples. There was frequent movement of Anarchist figures across borders, sharing ideas with Anarchists from other countries, but with the exception of occasional assassinations of political figures being carried out by nationals of other countries, the majority of acts (both violent and nonviolent) were conducted in the activists’ own countries, against national-level targets. Even the Spanish Civil War, which attracted Anarchist sympathizers and combatants from around the world, was fought in the national-specific goal of gaining control over Spain. The irony of non-statist, anti-authoritarian Anarchists seeking state control has not been lost on observers and scholars as an indication of a sign of confusion at the heart of the movement.¹⁴

Perhaps the most significant sign of this confusion can be seen in the way that certain national-based events were able to pull apart the transnational spirit of the movement. Key among these was World War I, when young Anarchists were often quick to drop their transnational anti-militaristic ideals and join in the support of their countries’ war efforts. World War I was initially able to bring to an end a shaky international alliance that had occurred between German and French trade unionists, and various Anarchist groups joined up to fight with their respective national forces.¹⁵

The dichotomy pulling apart the movement along national/transnational lines was also mirrored in different national factions’ tendencies toward particular strands of Anarchist or leftist thought, and more importantly, in their subsequent ideas about how autonomous from the state they should be. Thus, for example, “pure” Anarchists, who were more prominent in southern European countries, were fully opposed to involvement with the state, and appealed to strategies such as abstention from anything related to the state, such as voting, serving in the military, or paying taxes.¹⁶ At times, decisions to adhere to or back away from such practices proved to have significant implications, both for local politics and for the Anarchists themselves. In the 1930 municipal elections in Spain, for example, Anarchists chose to compromise their principle of avoiding state-related activities in the face of the greater enemy of the existing power, and went to the polls with their fellow leftists, bringing the republicans in and ridding the country of the monarchy. In 1933, however, they went back to their more common position of abstentionism, and without their estimated two million votes, the left was defeated. When the December 1935 election came around, they again decided to vote, and once again, the sheer numbers of their votes brought success to the leftist parties combined under the heading of the Popular Front coalition.¹⁷

In some countries, Anarchists even temporarily joined in politics themselves as a route to achieving their goals. The result for some was an increased disillusionment with political means and a firmer commitment to Anarchism, but for others the experience convinced them to leave the Anarchist ranks—or to propose a revised version of Anarchism. Individuals like Nieuwenhuis in Holland and Proudhon in France fell into the first category. In Proudhon’s case, he ran for and won a position in the Constituent Assembly, perhaps to gain official support for his idea of a People’s Bank. He soon left, however, after feeling that the

experience had caused him to lose touch with the masses. In the latter category fell such Anarchists as Andrea Costa in Italy, whose move to parliamentary socialism proved a huge loss for the Anarchists.

Despite even these dalliances with the state, ultimately one can still conclude that the Anarchists were firmly non-state actors in terms solely of their autonomy from the state. They were certainly never on the receiving end of any kind of aid or assistance from a particular state, they were almost exclusively reluctant to having any kind of dealings with states, and at its most fundamental level, their ideology was opposed to the ongoing existence of the state system overall.

Representation

The key criterion of representation, with respect to transnational actorness, can be considered as one of being able to regenerate one's constituency—on a global level. Two factors seem critical in achieving this: being able to attract a wide and diverse audience to the cause, and being able to manage this diverse audience so that it does not break apart into distinct, separate groups—a kind of “overstretch” phenomenon. The Anarchists seem to have done quite well on the first of these, less well on the second.

The Anarchist principle of going beyond unnaturally imposed authority and appealing completely to the sovereign individual holds within it a fundamental appeal that naturally transcends manmade political boundaries, and even broader ethnic or racial boundaries, and therefore holds within it the potential for unrestricted regenerative capacity. In other words, unlike a movement that can only recruit members among people of a particular nation, ethnic group, or religious belief, there is no limit to the pool of potential Anarchists.

Consequently, Anarchists were in the past and are, to the extent that they continue to exist, an extremely diverse group.¹⁸ To give an example from one country and time frame alone, analysis of the Italian Anarchist movement between 1900 and 1914 distinguishes six major currents: (1) Anarcho-communists; (2) Anarcho-Syndicalists; (3) anti-militarists and pacifists; (4) humanitarian educationalists; (5) local splinter groups; and (6) individualists.¹⁹ In other countries, groups of Anarchists were distinguished by their employment. In parts of Switzerland, for example, classical Anarchism drew its most dedicated members from the ranks of craftsmen (most notably the watchmakers), or in France we see Proudhon joining forces first with printers and later with the factory workers in Lyons. At other periods and places, the movement became highly associated with artists.²⁰ Most significantly, though, it is safe to say that in most cases the Anarchists drew their ranks from the discontented members of society. In certain countries in certain eras, the discontented were many, and the opportunities for Anarchist recruitment were great. When Bakunin went to Italy in the 1860s, for example, the masses of desperately poor Italians were open to his ideas. For the farmers in Spain or Portugal, the peasants in Ukraine, or some groups of early immigrants to the United States, extremely difficult living conditions bred openness to Anarchist ideas.

This diversity does not mean, however, that the Anarchists did not face problems in their efforts to build and maintain a global constituency. For the discontented, there was always the chance that the physical and economic conditions would improve, and when it did, active support for the Anarchists declined. Moreover, while the appeal to the sovereign individual holds the potential for unlimited representation, in the absence of a concrete pragmatic means to organize such a loosely organized following, and instead a reliance only on a “faith” in the natural bonds of society to take hold once authority is successfully eliminated, it also holds the ultimate potential for overstretch.

On top of these reasons, there was the simple fact that there were multiple options representing leftist behavior in general, from the Socialists and Communists to the Syndicalists, not to mention “sects” represented by key individuals, all of which were in a sense competing with the Anarchists for public support. During the First International “sectarian” tensions often kept the leftist groups preoccupied with fighting among themselves. Karl Marx and the Germans were associated with authoritarian, centralizing tendencies, the British leftists were pushing for State Socialism; Spain, Belgium, and the Jura region of Switzerland supported “pure” Anarchism; and various leading figures from among these nations were generally pushing against each other. The only common ground among Anarchists of the First International was the agreement that they were in opposition to the authoritarian Marxists. As one inappropriately upbeat assessment by a delegate to the Geneva conference of 1882 said: “We are united because we are divided.”²¹

So how numerous and how widespread were the Anarchists really? Measurement has been attempted by looking at membership numbers from the various internationals and congresses. Membership in the First International (a combination of leftists, but with solid, perhaps dominant Anarchist representation), for example, was estimated at being somewhere between a low estimate of around one million to a high estimate of five to seven million.²² By the 1920s, when Anarchism was largely associated with the revolutionary Syndicalists, a congress meeting in Berlin in 1922 saw delegates from 12 countries, representing organizations with more than a million members. With the entry the following year of the Spanish Syndicalists and later in the decade the Latin-American unions, membership in the International Workingmen’s Association reached a reported three million—although this number combined Anarchists, Anarcho-Syndicalists, and Syndicalists.²³

Numbers, however, could be misleading. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, for example, Anarchist membership grew rapidly, but it was due to the launching of new groups in Mediterranean Europe, Latin America, Portugal, Egypt, and Greece. In northern Europe their strength was rapidly fading and leftist alternatives, like parliamentary socialism, were gaining superiority. By the end of the London 1896 Congress, the Anarchists had been expelled from the Second International, thereby sealing the division lines between opposing sides of the Socialist movement (authoritarian vs. libertarian), and narrowing the Anarchists’ potential recruitment field. It also set up an obvious comparison camp—a factor that would become highly significant for maintaining constituency by the time of the Russian revolution, when the successes of the “other” camp would win them followers, and lower the Anarchists’ appeal.

If the internal divisions appeared stark during the “classical” period of Anarchism, the movement’s more recent manifestations are even broader, encompassing protest groups of all kinds, environmentalists, antinuclear protestors, feminists, students, conscientious objectors, not to mention writers, artists, and fringe cultural elements. If these diverse groups can come together under a banner of Anarchism it may seem a positive evolutionary move to maintain the representation capacity of the movement, but at the same time leads to tremendous problems of overstretch.

Means for Building Representation

When we consider the various means used by the Anarchists to spread their message and seek greater representation, a large number of them can be categorized under the broad heading of “Propaganda by Word,” and basically refer to various ways of getting the message to the masses. Indeed, long before there was such a thing as a proclaimed “Anarchist” ideology or movement, writers were espousing pre-Anarchist ideals of anti-authoritarianism

and libertarianism in their texts, and promoting different ways of spreading these ideas. In eighteenth-century England, William Godwin suggested having discussion groups on a small, local scale to inform people about anti-authoritarian ideals. The principle behind these groups runs throughout the works of subsequent Anarchists, with discussion of ideas being conducted via such means as human “connectors,” alternative education systems, secret international organizations or workers’ associations, and international meetings and congresses. Whatever the venue, the idea was that the open exchange of views would lead to a spreading of Anarchist ideas.

Connectors

Ideas were frequently spread by exiled activists, who shared their ideas and experiences with local Anarchist groups and with each other on their journeys. Most of the significant names of Anarchist history were in fact “connectors,” men (and in some cases women) who traveled—both within their home countries and internationally, either by choice or because of having been exiled by their home states—and spread Anarchist thought through personal connections and by speaking to groups of workers, intellectuals, farmers, and so on. In most cases, the spreading of ideas began modestly, and then grew gradually. Proudhon for example, worked early on as an Anarchist to establish contacts with workers’ groups “for fifty miles around” his homebase of Lyons.²⁴ He then traveled to Paris, where he met Russian leftists Alexander Herzen and Michael Bakunin, and Germans like Karl Marx, who brought Proudhon’s writings back to Germany.

Bakunin was a great traveler and connector, making his presence known across Europe, and even venturing as far as the United States. When he settled late in life in Italy, he became an attraction point for revolutionaries from all around Europe, and proved the spark igniting the Italian Anarchist movement. By traveling and spreading his ideas he would spawn an Anarchist network that would, after his own death, become one of far greater influence than he himself ever witnessed. His fellow Russian, Peter Kropotkin, was also a tremendously significant connector, both through his writings and his physical presence. He spent many decades of his life in England, where his influence on the nature of Anarchism there was particularly critical. Due to the respect associated with his image and particular approach to Anarchism, he helped change local English understandings of Anarchism from one signifying only opposition and destruction, to one presenting a viable alternative to the existing system.

Errico Malatesta, the Italian Anarchist, visited such countries as Spain, Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Greece, and Romania in the 1870s, and founding Anarchist groups in nearly every country he went to. In later years he would travel to Argentina, and still later, after escaping from exile on the island of Lampedusa, to the United States. There were of course hundreds of less well-known connectors, from the German Johann Most, whose travels through the United States fueled a violent streak in the American Anarchist movement, to the French militant Eugene Varlin, who built up strong relationships with the leftist groups in the Jura region of Switzerland, brought back their ideas to share with other French militants, and then, with common associates in Switzerland, served as a convenient connector for Bakunin’s ideas to be introduced into the French International.

Education

Anti-authoritarian, libertarian, Anarchist ideas could be spread both by lecture and by example via the education system, so the establishing of independent schools was another

means promoted by some Anarchists or anti-authoritarian thinkers, such as Godwin and Tolstoy.²⁵ The progressive libertarian education movement began setting up schools in France around the start of the twentieth century, including the *Universités Populaires*, which provided evening classes for adults, and a series of alternative schools based on Anarchist principles, which were established in the United States²⁶ and England.²⁷ A movement to open libertarian schools gained strength in Spain around the turn of the century,²⁸ and a well-documented aspect to the Spanish Anarchist movement was its literacy efforts for peasants and industrial workers.²⁹

The Printed Word

Although discussions, lectures, and personal contacts were used to spread the word orally, and alternative education could address societal inequality through direct instruction, the printed word was the key means of propagandizing and recruiting in the early years of Anarchism. There were books on social change and revolution, political pamphlets, newspapers, and magazines devoted to the Anarchist cause, and literary works incorporating Anarchist ideas.

Books considered as predecessors to Anarchist thought included William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), which gained rapid popularity and was then equally quickly overshadowed by the outbreak of war between France and England and Edmund Burke's *A Vindication of Natural Society* (1756). It was in the writings of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, however, that anti-authoritarian ideas were first identified as "Anarchism."³⁰ Also a prolific writer, the Russian Anarchist Peter Kropotkin wrote numerous books and pamphlets, including *Modern Science and Anarchism*; *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution*; *Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow*; and *The Conquest of Bread*.³¹

In terms of making the movement more transnational, books and other texts were passed from country to country, and works by significant Anarchist writers were translated into different languages. Proudhon's works, for example, were translated into Spanish in the 1860s, and had a significant influence on the growth of the movement there, later to be challenged as Kropotkin's works began being translated into Spanish in the mid-1880s, and bringing out in Spain the well-known debates on questions of organization and distribution of property—Proudhonian mutualism or the more Anarcho-communistic ideas of Kropotkin.

Perhaps even more important than books, journals and newspapers served as a key means for spreading ideas among the public, as they were accessible to virtually everyone, workers and elite alike. The first Anarchist periodical is reported to have been *El Provenir*, which appeared briefly in Spain in 1845, but the first major newspaper was Proudhon's *Le Représentant du peuple*, started in 1848. A history of the era by Comtesse d'Agoult, notes that the newspaper "excited the curiosity of the public to the highest degree," and circulation in Paris for each issue reached nearly 40,000.³² A series of later newspapers, such as the Geneva-based *The Bulletin*, which was strong in the 1860s–1870s, was later followed by two Paris-based Anarchist journals, *Le Revolte* and *Le Pere Peinard*, which became the most significant Anarchist papers since Proudhon's, selling more than 10,000 copies a week.

Journals and newspapers would continue to play a significant role across Europe and North America throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There were journals such as *Insurrezione* (one of many expatriate Italian Anarchist journals), and *La Questione Sociale*, or *Umanita Nova*, both produced in Italy. As the movement began to

grow in Spain in the 1860s and 1870s there was the emergence of Anarchist newspapers there, such as *La Federacion* and *Solidaridad*, and later, in the 1890s, the more academic *La Revista Blanca*. The journal *Freedom* ran for years in England with readership reaching a peak of around 3,000,³³ and the *Bulletin international du mouvement Syndicaliste*, founded in 1907 by Christian Cornelissen, served particularly to the Syndicalist factions of the Anarchists both in Europe and in North and South America. *Die Freiheit* was published in London and New York in the 1880s, and American -based journals such as *Radical Review* and *Liberty* would emerge somewhat later.

Ideas could also be spread through the preparation and distribution of major manifestos, such as the *Manifesto of the Sixty* in France in 1864, or smaller pamphlets, such as Kropotkin's "Should We Occupy Ourselves with Examining the Ideals of a Future Society?" or "Letter to the Workers of the World," which he wrote in Russia but which was passed out of the country and published in the Western media.

Secret Groups and Workers' Organizations

Word could also be spread and recruitment accomplished through the formation, promotion, and regular meetings of various groups and organizations—from underground ad hoc gatherings, to large-scale, organized bodies. Although many Anarchists, Kropotkin for example, felt that social revolution could only come about through a massive, spontaneous groundswell by the people, others, like Bakunin, thought more in terms of conspiratorial activity, and were therefore supporters of small secret societies—often comprised of an ideal of mini-groups with five members. Bakunin's first such society, the International Brotherhood, was founded in the mid-1860s in Italy. According to his claims, the Brotherhood had adherents across Europe, from Sweden and Norway to the Mediterranean countries. Later he would launch the International Alliance of Social Democracy. Although it did not have mass membership, it did have sections across Switzerland, Italy, France, and Spain. Italian Anarchists later drew on Bakunin's ideas and established a secret inner organization for the purpose of initiating insurrectionary actions (the Committee for Social Revolution), the idea being that if they could provoke a few strategic uprisings, there would be a chain reaction of others, and ultimately, a mass revolution.

The idea of workers' associations was written about early on by Proudhon, who called them "progressive societies," and defined them as groups to both educate workers about economic realities, and to regulate the exchange of goods and services on a mutualist basis. A related but more contentious means of spreading Anarchist thought was through actual trade unions. For "pure"³⁴ Anarchists, trade unions were an inadequate means if they worked only to improve wages or decrease working hours. They were acceptable if they strove to eliminate the wage system and to take control over production. In other words, the debate boiled down to whether you saw the trade unions as a temporary means to achieving an entirely new form of political, economic, and moral societal structure or whether, like the Syndicalists, you saw them as a constituting an alternative end structure based on the economic solidarity of the workers.³⁵

Finally, in terms of their role in spreading Anarchist ideas globally, one can consider the regular meetings and international congresses of broad groupings of leftists and revolutionaries, from the overarching First International and its various congresses, to the focused congresses set up in opposition once the Anarchists were banned from the Second International. The purpose of these meetings and congresses was to bring together delegates from different countries and regions to discuss the movement, debate philosophical points, and, sometimes (depending on just how *non-Anarchistic* the dominant mood was at a

particular congress), drawing up agendas for future directions. Most importantly, for the Anarchists, these meetings and congresses served as venues for linking local groups and giving them the truly transnational force and spirit they intended to have. An example of the Anarchists' transnational nature is the 1907 Amsterdam Congress, in which delegates of sub-national groupings came not only from all around Europe, but also North America, Latin America, and as far away as Japan.

These meetings were an important means for communication and making contact, which was otherwise far more limited than it is today.³⁶ Having said that though, the ultimate success of the congresses lay in whether there were actual accomplishments to be pointed to. Without being able to point to successes, the meetings failed to keep the attention of the audience, and both the congress and, ultimately the movement, would fade into the background. Which brings one to the shift toward violent means—certainly the most dramatic way of gaining attention and, possibly, of building representation.

General Agitation, Insurrection, and Beyond

If Godwin, Proudhon and even, eventually, Kropotkin, were basically satisfied by peaceful activity (discussion, education, alternative banks, books, and newspapers), other Anarchists were not. Joseph Dejacque, for example, predated the later “propagandists by deed” with an extreme adoption of violence, in which he foresaw small groups of Anarchists destroying the old order by using steel, poison, and fire.³⁷ Although the phrase “propaganda by deed” was penned by Kropotkin and is most often associated with Anarchists like Bakunin and Enrico Malatesta, the rationale behind a shift from propaganda by word to that of physical action is perhaps summed up best by Carlo Pisacane, an Italian activist, posthumously claimed as an Anarchist:

The propaganda of the idea is a chimera. Ideas result from deeds, not the latter from the former, and the people will not be free when they are educated, but will be educated when they are free. The only work a citizen can do for the good of the country is that of cooperating with the material revolution; therefore, conspiracies, plots, attempts, etc., are that series of deeds by which Italy proceeds towards her goal.³⁸

Over the course of his life, Bakunin put words to action, and assumed a leading role in five insurrections across Europe. Despite the fact that none of these were very successful, his era marks the beginning of one in which Anarchist thought would become more than theories and literary ideas, and begin serving as guiding principles for actions taken by discontented workers and peasants.

By the late 1870s, as Kropotkin was shifting away from advocating violent means, the move toward actual “propaganda by deed” (not just theoretical discussion of it) had become widespread. Parts of the movement in southern Europe in particular were increasingly appealing to violent means. A wave of terror struck France in the 1880s and through 1894 (the Trial of the Thirty). Although only a minority of Anarchists participated in such activities, it was these acts that grabbed public attention. Their acts included bombings, assassinations, destruction of buildings, even the occasional suicide attack—all of which were conducted by individuals or groups of two to four people.

Not unlike those fringe elements who supported the use of violence, others accepted the committing of criminal acts to support the cause and simply to inflict punishment on the “enemy” state. In his writings, Max Stirner went so far as to even glorify crime, seeing

it as representing the constant struggle of the egoist against all power. In France in the late nineteenth century there was considerable discussion about whether robbery could be a justifiable mean for Anarchists given that property was seen as an immoral thing to begin with (recall Proudhon's famous, "property is theft"). Somewhat similar to the use of crime was the use in Spain in the early twentieth century of professional *pistoleros*, who were like criminal mercenaries, fighting for the Anarchists one day and the authorities the next. Anarchists justified the sometimes alliance by drawing on the image of the criminal as a rebel against authoritarian society.

Although dramatic and violent acts certainly raised public attention about the Anarchists, sometimes "deeds" could prove counter-productive for Anarchists. A clear example of this was the botched suicide bombing by a French Anarchist in London, which turned public opinion in England strongly against the use of violent means. Even in Italy, where the "deed" was strongly promoted by Anarchist leaders and, in the case of insurrections and some other violent deeds, was quite popular, it could backfire. This was the case when a group of Anarchists in Milan set off bombs in a theater, a power station, and a hotel in March 1921, and more than 20 people were killed. Public opinion was very opposed to these attacks, and the government was able to then justify further harsh responses against the Anarchists.

A factor demanding further consideration therefore seems to be 'appropriateness' of the act, whether it is the initial deed or (as we'll see in the following section) the countering response. The trick for the Anarchist attackers seeking to increase the movement's recognition and ultimately representation, was to accurately assess the public's anger and frustration and design powerful—but not *too* powerful—attacks. The countering forces had to assess the public's outrage at the attacks and design appropriate—firm, but not too firm—responses.

Perhaps in light of the "appropriateness" issue, it is also interesting to speculate how the Anarchists might have escalated the violent aspect of the movement had they chosen to, but ultimately did not. As early as the 1881 conference in London, there is evidence of at least one representative, Dr. Edward Nathan-Ganz from Mexico, speaking fervently about the use of "chemistry" as a weapon, about the idea of a military academy for Anarchists, and about instruction in chemistry at that academy. Ultimately, his ideas for ratcheting up of the violence level were rejected. One has to wonder what might have happened had Nathan-Ganz been a more convincing figure, and had the Anarchists become the first global non-state entity with chemical weapons at their disposal—a point which brings us directly to the question of influence.

Influence

A movement's "influence" can perhaps best be understood by asking questions such as: Were the Anarchists influential enough to be able to *force* states to pay attention and to respond to them? Were they able to force changes in states' policies or state-centric principles? And were they able to withstand state persecution by continuing to commit acts of a significant nature and continuing to build their global representation? Certainly they provoked state responses, as the sections that follow will show in detail. Their acts also led states to reconsider traditional policies and ways of interacting with each other, for example, by developing new ways of cooperating to counter Anarchist activities. By considering the various means used to counter the Anarchists' acts, it is possible to discern patterns of an evolving and escalating interaction between those acts and responses that both help to

measure the ultimate influence of the Anarchists as a global non-state security actor but also to suggest lessons for dealing with current and future non-state security actors.

State Responses and the Anarchists' Capacity to Withstand Them

Censorship, Arrests, and Imprisonment. Against the various forms of Anarchist texts, the first obvious response by states was censorship—via a combination of efforts including fines, persecution, libel suits, or physically destroying the facilities producing the texts. The effectiveness of censorship all on its own is questionable, as an example from the French case shows. When Proudhon's newspaper wrote articles deemed too threatening to the state system or in its anti-clericalism, his operation was shut down, but he simply reopened the newspaper under the new name, *Le Peuple*. When this effort too was later shut down and its offices destroyed by the National Guard, it was replaced by *Le voix du peuple*. Later efforts in France to reopen a libertarian press, which would each in turn be shut down, resulted in a series of journals, from *La Tribune Ouvriere* to *La Fourmi*, *L'Avenir National*, and *Le Courrier Francais*.

Arrests and imprisonment were perhaps the most common responses by state forces, and were used widely by individual governments around the world as they faced the Anarchist threat. Depending on the conditions of the imprisonment, the practice was more or less effective. In the early days of the movement in France, Proudhon, for example, was imprisoned and fined for his anti-statist texts. At least in this case, imprisonment was not a completely successful response by the state because in prison Proudhon was able to write three books and still edit his newspapers. Being imprisoned also enhanced his reputation. On days when he wrote articles from his prison cell, it is reported that newspaper sales were between 50,000–60,000. Bakunin's prison experience was more successful from a countering perspective, as his ideas were not easily allowed to pass outside the prison. Between Saxony and Austria, and finally in Russia, he spent nearly eight years in prison, followed up by exile to Siberia. Although his image upon release remained compelling and he was still able to attract attention, the harsh years in prison did succeed in ruining his health and taming him to some degree.

In other cases, arrests and imprisonment of Anarchists clearly did work against the broader Anarchist cause, although not necessarily in direct benefit of the state. In early twentieth-century France, the Anarchist movement had teamed up with the Syndicalist trade unions to create the roots of Anarcho-syndicalism. The imprisonment of the leaders of the Anarcho-Syndicalists allowed the "pure" Syndicalists to take their place, and spelled an irreversible shift in the movement away from Anarchism. Although the Anarchists would never entirely lose their place in the movement, they would also never regain any significant control over its direction or policy.

Legislative Measures. Legislative measures ranged from mild moves to more drastic ones. At the mild end, an example from Proudhon's era saw the French legislature attempt to counter Anarchist publishing by levying a stamp tax on all political literature. This stamp tax raised the price of the newspapers and sharply reduced the circulation of Proudhon's *Le voix du peuple*. The subsequent loss of revenue left the paper unable to pay a large fine that had also been imposed, and ultimately proved a successful blow, closing down the paper once and for all.

At the more drastic end were legislative measures such as those to guarantee the state's ability to imprison suspected Anarchists. In France, the terrorist acts of the 1880s and 1890s led to the infamous *lois scelerates*, which made it illegal to incite or even apologize

for criminal acts, forbade “associations of malefactors” (and did so on the basis of mere intent to cause harm rather than only actual deed), and finally, forbade any act of Anarchist propaganda of any kind whatsoever. Using these laws, the French government was able to completely bring the Anarchist press to a halt, to bring to trial virtually all the movement’s leaders, and to break up the various groups around the country. In the United States, even the tradition of open borders for political refugees could not stand up to fears about violent Anarchists in the wake of the Haymarket Square riot and the assassination of President McKinley, and a law was passed in 1903 banning Anarchists from entering the U.S.³⁹

Police Spies/Human Intelligence. The use of police spies seems to have been quite extensive in various states’ response to the Anarchist threat. One of the most famous cases was that of a French *agent provocateur* named Serreaux, who was able to join in the Anarchist Congress in London in 1881. The French police chief who arranged this particular move, Louis Andrieux, also devised an elaborate scheme to infiltrate the French Anarchists by setting up an “Anarchist” journal. Claiming to have gained funds as a gift from a British woman, the same police agent, Serreaux, was able to convince Anarchist leaders to use the money and set up the journal, *Le Revolution Sociale*. The journal ran for over a year, and allowed the police direct insights into the workings of the Anarchists, as well as an outlet for planting ideas and provoking others in the name of the Anarchists. Human intelligence methods were also successful in Italy, where the Committee for Social Revolution saw the majority of its plans for strategic uprisings foiled by the police, who gained key information about the plans and were thus able to intercept activists, and disrupt activities.

A somewhat related countering means was the conducting of look-alike crimes in order to both create excuses for arrests and to sway public opinion against the Anarchists. During the peak decade of terror in France, for example, some bombings have been attributed to the police rather than the actual Anarchists, and even the famous Haymarket riot and shooting in Chicago has been argued to have been sparked by a police bullet rather than an Anarchist one.⁴⁰

Exile. Another common state response against Anarchists was to force them into exile. In other cases, Anarchists themselves chose to go into a kind of “self-exile” to escape persecution. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, it could be considered as a somewhat successful response. Working from even as close by as Belgium complicated Proudhon’s efforts in the mid-1800s to get his journal (*La Presse Ouvriere*) past customs officials and back into France. Further-off places, like the United States, were even less accessible, and made matters even more difficult for the Anarchists. It is interesting to note, for example, that in the early 1870s, Karl Marx chose to move the General Council of the International to New York in order to protect it *from* the influence of the Anarchists. The move was self-defeating, as in this distant place the Council “languished and quickly died from sheer inaction.”⁴¹ For some Anarchists, like Ernest Coeurderoy and Joseph Dejacque (contemporaries of Proudhon), being on the move made it difficult to set up and organize anywhere, let alone to play a role in the French Anarchist movement—which was, after all, the state’s goal in exiling them. The challenges and frustrations of being in exile are described in Coeurderoy’s *Jours d’exil*. Exile also proved useful for the state in the Italian case, when, in the late 1870s the exiling of the Anarchist leaders Cafiero and Malatesta were factors in the failure of the International in Italy. Looking at the case of the United States, the deportations of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman were also successful from a countering perspective. Even if they could have gotten their ideas back into the United

States, their physical absence stripped the movement of powerful, inspiring personalities, and the movement faded into complacency.

The practice of exiling Anarchists emphasized the local side of the Anarchist threat, because it implied that once out of the country they could do no harm. Had the movement been perceived as truly transnational, then simply relocating a threatening figure outside one's national borders would not have seemed an effective response. Indeed, there were several cases in which exile was actually useful for the Anarchists, and thus ineffective as a countering response. Some Anarchists in exile became connectors, who spread and shared their ideas across borders and continents. Certain cities in Switzerland and England in particular became centers for exiles, and subsequently, very fertile areas for exchanging ideas and plans. Switzerland in the late nineteenth century was a gathering place for radical Russians. Bakunin, for example, was not originally a self-proclaimed Anarchist, but after leaving Russia by choice and spending years meeting with intellectuals, bohemians, and exiles in Switzerland and other countries, he adopted Anarchist principles over his pan-Slavist tendencies.⁴² He was also subjected to deportation and imposed exile; deported from France in the late 1840s for example, and exiled to Siberia in the 1850s. Even in the far east of Siberia though, he was able to meet with people, and, eventually, to escape, via Japan, across the United States, and back to Europe. Proudhon's case is again interesting in the sense of mixed benefits, for while his exile in Belgium on the one hand restricted his ability to propagandize in France, he was far from being cut off from Anarchist activity. It was during his time in Belgium that he was able to meet with Tolstoy, and messages were delivered to him from Bakunin, who was at the time in exile in Siberia. He was also approached by groups of workers from France who came to him for advice.

As suggested earlier, an interesting aspect to the practice of exile—and its ultimate success as a countering means—is the relationship it holds to the question of whether the movement was transnational or national. Were exiled Anarchists allowed to continue practicing the ideas or acts that had led to their exile in the first place or did some form of international cooperation between states keep them under pressure in the host country? In many cases it appears that for exiled Anarchists whose main message was non-threatening to the host country, either by being a nationalist message (and thus directed at a nation outside of the one in which they were exiled), or a nonviolent one, they were allowed to continue speaking out without persecution. Kropotkin, for example, despite his leading position in the Anarchist movement, spent more than 30 unpersecuted years in England. There he represented not only the face of Anarchism as a theory of social change but, more pointedly, restricted himself to activities that did not directly threaten the British state, such as lecture tours, founding periodicals, and theorizing, and increasingly moved away from his earlier support for violent methods.

For those in exile whose message was broader and/or more violent, and thus posed a potential threat to the host country as well, there is evidence of greater international cooperation to keep them under pressure. Examples include the French keeping a close eye on the Italian Malatesta when he was within their borders, Russian pressure leading to Bakunin's exile from France, and the deporting of a younger, less "peaceful" Kropotkin from Switzerland in 1881. Evidence of international state alliances to counter the Anarchists can also be seen at times when the Anarchists seemed to be presenting a significant threat beyond specific national levels, such as when they took power in Spain. At this point there emerged an alliance of nation-states—directly on the part of Germany and Italy, indirectly on the part of the Russians and French—who jointly refused to sell arms to the Anarchists, thereby cutting off their ability to compete militarily.⁴³

State Force. Moving up the scale of response measures, the final countering means to be considered is the use of brute force by the police or military. This was generally used in cases of states facing more significant threats, such as violent insurrections, but not always. Of course, while state force could often succeed in crushing the immediate problem, the after-effects were less predictable. This was particularly so if the state's reaction was perceived to have been excessive in response to the original crime, in which cases the harsh response only succeeded in more violent acts and in greater popularity for the Anarchist cause. Examples of this were the support gained by the Anarchists after brutal repression of the Paris commune (1871) and after the Sacco and Vanzetti killings in 1927.⁴⁴

Most important therefore in considering the effectiveness of using force against the Anarchists is not so much the question of whether it ultimately succeeded—history proves that states were in the end able to forcefully defeat the Anarchists—but rather what type of patterns emerged in the evolution of the Anarchist movement and its influence as a result of states' using force against them.

Patterns in Acts–Counter-Response Interaction

Looking at the period in which the Anarchists were an active part of global affairs, certain patterns can be seen in the relationship between acts and responses. This pattern almost inevitably led to an overall escalation of both violence and Anarchist influence—although not always (see Figure 1). The Anarchists generally led off the interaction with small means or acts, such as publishing newspapers with limited circulations, setting up isolated alternative communities or schools, or organizing meetings with minimal attendance. In some cases, these moves attracted small responses, such as fines, warnings, perhaps temporary exile or short prison sentences for the leaders. Such a “mild” interaction ultimately brought minimal influence to the Anarchist movement, as it attracted very limited attention both from the state and from the “audience” of the mass public. On the other hand, it also caused no direct harm to the continuity of the movement, as it was quite easy to withstand or bounce back from the relatively minor counter-responses.

The Anarchists could react to these small responses in two ways: with further small acts or by choosing to ratchet up the volume and violence with bigger acts. In the case of continuing small acts, roughly like what happened in England or Holland for example, the interaction was able to continue in this same manner—small acts followed by small responses—for an extended time. Throughout this interaction the Anarchists gained minimal influence, and ultimately ended up fading away or simply remaining very much marginal actors. This pattern was arguably the result in contexts where the movement did not have a significant natural appeal—and therefore little regenerative representation capacity. The lack of fervor for Anarchism in places like Holland (compared with that in countries like Italy or Spain) has been attributed to the fact that living conditions in northern Europe simply were not as harsh as in other places, or as one Anarchist wrote, the relative lack of excitement for and persecution of the few outspoken Anarchists in these countries was due to their “. . . enjoying the prestige that in northern lands is granted to those voices crying in the wilderness, which form the conveniently externalized consciences of peoples largely devoted to the acquisition and enjoyment of material prosperity.”⁴⁵

Before looking at what happened when the Anarchists chose to respond with bigger acts, consider what happened in cases of states responding with overwhelming force to the Anarchists' initial small acts. Two general outcomes seemed to emerge in such cases, one of which was that the huge response succeeded in quite quickly crushing the Anarchists. This seemed to occur when an immediately viable and influential alternative ideology

existed, such as the Socialists and Communists in Germany and Russia. In Germany, where the Socialists presented a strong alternative, the state's extreme responses, such as the execution of all members of a group of Anarchists who attempted unsuccessfully to execute the Kaiser in 1883, was able to keep the Anarchists from ever growing. In Russia, the Anarchists lost members to the Communists after 1917, and on top of this were so thoroughly and effectively persecuted that the movement was simply wiped out.

The most interesting patterns emerge in the two remaining interaction patterns: cases when the Anarchists chose to turn to more violent, bigger acts after overcoming small responses, and cases in which the state's overwhelmingly strong opening responses were deemed inappropriate by a public "audience" that was potentially open to the Anarchist ideology. The former was the common starting pattern for many, if not most, countries. The Anarchists realized that a "small acts and small responses" pattern resulted in minimal influence, so the obvious move was to commit bigger, more threatening acts, such as violent meetings, armed insurrections, massive strikes, and terrorist attacks. These means obviously held greater risks, but they also brought greater recognition (potential representation). They also resulted in greater influence because they forced the targeted states into a counter-response paradox of also feeling the need to increase the size and strength of the response. Small, peaceful responses of censorship or fines simply could not be accepted for major, violent acts. Once the states made their stronger responses, a cycle of increasingly violent acts and responses would be set off.

Such a cycle could also be set off in cases in which the states came back immediately with an overwhelming response to initial small acts. When such strong responses took place in countries or regions in which a powerful, viable alternative ideology did not exist or in which the context was highly conducive to Anarchist ideology (in other words, the people were poor and struggling), the overwhelming responses could easily backfire by raising public sympathy for the Anarchist cause. The Anarchists would both gain in recognition (representation) and in influence, meaning that even if the severe measures were able to temporarily crush them, they were able to eventually return and hit back—inevitably in a stronger manner. At this point the interaction in these cases entered into the same holding pattern described earlier, of major acts followed by major responses.

Regardless of how it began, this most common pattern tended to continue for quite some time—even decades—but as hindsight now makes clear, ultimately state persecution was able to rid countries of their Anarchist threat, and by 1940 the Anarchist movement was largely dead, while the states that had fought it largely continued to exist. It can also be argued that even during the height of the movement, persecution at the national level was able to push the Anarchists out of certain countries. During the era of the First International, for example, Anarchists were largely represented by members from countries and regions in which they were allowed to conduct their activities relatively openly (e.g., Belgium and Switzerland) and not by members from Spain, Italy, or France, where harsher government persecution was proving effective in preventing easy organization and therefore growth.

Discussion

There is little mystery in answering the question of the Anarchists' ultimate success or failure; as noted earlier, they failed in the sense that for more than a half century they have clearly not constituted a significant actor in global affairs. On the other hand, they were around for a long time. On what fronts then did they fail, and in what ways? Were they able to persist as a powerful movement even when persecuted by the state? Were they able to keep up their attacks, to maintain and build their representation, to provoke ever

greater state responses, and ultimately, increase their influence? The answer to all of these is no. Anarchists seem to have fallen short of these goals on the basis of three essential philosophical debates that ate at the movement, and which can be roughly correlated to the concepts of autonomy, representation, and influence: the international/national debate; the organizational debate; and the debate over means.

The International/National Debate

How does a movement reconcile its ideals of a world without national boundaries while insisting on the rights of local autonomy and personal spontaneity?⁴⁶ Although all Anarchists were opposed to the state, they were divided on questions such as whether to be abstentionists and refrain from all dealings with the state, or whether to fight the state from within by joining in political parties. They were also divided over what should happen to the state after an Anarchist “victory”—should the state and its organization be immediately disbanded or should it be allowed to continue for a while until a proper time?

The international/national dichotomy raises an interesting question: although an overarching philosophy may be enough to bring together sovereign individuals, it may not be enough to eliminate competing aspects of these individuals’ identities. The dilemma is by no means unique to the Anarchists, but applies to any movement that is committed to a global or transnational philosophy or ideology. How does a movement with global ideals cope with the apparently natural inclination for separate, nation-specific movements to emerge?⁴⁷ This point brings the article to the question of organization.

The Organizational Debate

Another fundamental philosophical divide among Anarchists was the question of organization and its connection to issues of representation. How much organization was “acceptable” to an Anarchist reflected his or her ideological positioning on questions of individualism versus collectivism. At the broader level, such positionings would determine whether the movement would remain more limited or would open itself up to collaboration and alliances with similar ideological groups, from the Socialists to the Syndicalists, with the Anarchists’ greatest “successes” generally occurring during the time of collaboration. What one sees therefore is a fluctuating between moderating the ideology to join ranks with others and achieving greater international representation (but then risking the loss of all Anarchism in the true sense of the word), and standing by a “pure” Anarchist ideology in order to maintain internal integrity (but risking a loss of influence).

If remaining “purely” Anarchist meant risking a loss of influence, part of the reason goes back to the question of organization. How do you create an effective global organization without tolerating any kind of central command, or without becoming involved in political parties? How do you keep people involved and active without centralized authority? The experience of classical Anarchists, especially during their periods of trying to remain separate from other leftists, reveals the complexities and the up and down cycles of a movement without a strong organizational leadership. Despite being widespread in the sense of having active participation in many areas of the world, Anarchist efforts remained small-scale and local, and the Anarchists were largely unable to arrange even regular international congresses in which to meet and discuss the movement. This inability had less to do with being blocked by the state (although that did occur as well), and more to do with quickly waning interest of the members. After the 1907 Amsterdam congress, for example, a then instituted monthly bulletin of information lasted only one year before ending with

a story on the “apathy” that had “overcome all those who clamored most loudly at the Congress on the need for the Anarchist International.”⁴⁸

Ultimately, it seems that for ideological reasons the pure Anarchists were unable to manage either side of the representation measure. In terms of overstretch, the pure form of the ideology could not accept within its ranks offshoot Anarchist groups, like the hybrid Anarcho-Syndicalists, who worked within the trade unions and therefore in a much more centralized form of organizational structure. The Anarcho-Syndicalists reached greater successes because they brought together many of the Anarchists’ general ideological goals with the organization needed to meet the needs of their worker constituents—improving their daily working and living conditions. The pure Anarchists, with the insistence on a loose coming together of individuals or loose, flexible affinity groupings failed to acquire the necessary numbers of representation or to respond effectively to workers’ needs. Nor could the Anarchists join together with somewhat similarly minded leftist groups that opted to go the statist route—most notably the Socialists in parts of Europe and the Communists who led the Russian Revolution. While the latter stole the energy of worldwide leftist spirit for years after 1917, the former had the staying power to maintain a position in the political arena right up to the present day.

In terms of ideology, the jihadists seem to have an advantage over the Anarchists. Unlike the secular Anarchist ideology that highlighted individualism and provoked debate among its followers, violent jihadism is highly dogmatic, a fact that serves to keep its constituents more harmonious and thus the movement more sustainable.

The Debate over Means

The third major philosophical divide among Anarchists can be linked to the element of influence, as it concerns the means that were used to spread the movement and the striking division between Anarchists who supported “propaganda by deed” and those who supported using peaceful means. In looking at the aforementioned patterns in the use of means and counter-means, it looks as if propaganda by deed garnered the strongest reaction by the states and that in turn helped build influence for the Anarchists. Nonviolent means were countered with relative ease (e.g., shutting down presses, imprisoning or exiling influential figures, preventing funds from being collected to support strikes), and allowed states to comfortably focus their sights on the statist threats that seemed to carry greater risk to their survival. Only when the Anarchists turned violent did mass awareness of their deeds become known, and state response was ratcheted up (even excessively so, which also helped the Anarchists at times) thereby signifying a rise in Anarchists’ overall influence. On the other hand, in some cases the Anarchists’ failure is attributed in part to the mass distaste for the shift toward violent means of action.⁴⁹ The dilemma for the Anarchists was that the means selected for best displaying their influence (and for ensuring the state response that is a measurement of influence) was an inappropriate one for increasing their representation.

It is possible to link the question of means with the aforementioned one about organization, when one considers that the most “successful” of Anarchist-minded groups in terms of achieving large followings that spread across countries and continents, have been those with Syndicalist ties using trade unions as an organizational format. Even so committed an Anarchist as Woodcock admits that “pure” Anarchists working on the premises of spontaneous, uncentralized propaganda by word or by deed, can never achieve equal results to the centrally organized Syndicalist organization.⁵⁰ The overall experience of the Anarchists suggests that while deeds are the key to maintaining public awareness and interest and therefore recruitment capacity, such deeds require an organizational structure with a central organizer and committed rank and file. The combination of a structure that can

carry out elaborate plans over an extended period of time and the deeds themselves prompt state response and, by sheer volume and strength of the deeds increase the chances that state response will be inadequate. On this level the Anarchists failed, both for ideological reasons and technical ones. Unlike their predecessors, the *jihadists* face no such ideological dilemma in their organizational attempts, and benefit from tremendous technological developments that ease their organizational capacity at a transnational level.

As a final blow to the Anarchists in their bid for transnational actorness one can consider yet another dilemma: the incompatibility of their general autonomous philosophy with changes occurring in the world system over the last 150 years. The Anarchist alternative of denying the state came up against an era in which the dominance of the state was peaking (and probably was in part a response to that). The Anarchist movement thus emerged in an era where the dominant philosophy was against them but the technological rewards of this era (available to the *jihadists*) were not around. Facing such fundamental barriers, a truly global ideology was forced to operate more locally, and was thus able to be managed and brought under control.

Notes

1. See a recent exploration of the transnational aspects to civil war and conflict in Kristian S. Gleditsch, "Transnational Dimensions of Civil War," *Journal of Peace Research*, 44 (2007), pp. 293–309.

2. A growth reflected in the literature. Although there was some literature on transnational activity pre-dating the end of the Cold War, for example, works featured in a 1976 volume of *International Affairs* (vol. 52, issue 3) or Bernard Mennis and Karl P. Sauvant, *Emerging Forms of Transnational Community* (Lexington Books, 1976), a gradual but steady increase in works can be seen in the 1990s, much of it focusing on the nonviolent forms of transnational activity, such as Thomas Risse-Kappen, ed., *Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Non-State Actors, Domestic Structures and International Institutions*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1995); M. E. Keck and K. Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998); or Darren Hawkins, "Transnational Activists as Motors for Change," *International Studies Review*, 1 (1999) pp. 119–203.

3. James N. Rosenau, *Distant Proximities: Dynamics beyond Globalization* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

4. "For Jihadist, Read Anarchist," *The Economist*, 376(8440) (20 August 2005), pp. 17–20.

5. Carl Levy, "Anarchism, Internationalism and Nationalism in Europe, 1860–1939," *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 50(3), pp. 330–342, p. 330. Unless specified otherwise, the basic events and information in this section come from five standard accounts of "classical" Anarchism—Daniel Guérin, *Anarchism* (New York 2004, Monthly Review Press, 1970); James Joll, *The Anarchists*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1980); George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Broadview Press, Ltd., 2004); Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible. A History of Anarchism* (London, Fontana Press, 1993); and Max Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism* (London, Freedom Press, 1996).

6. For more on the modern face of the Anarchist movement, beginning with the 1999 Seattle protests of the World Trade Organization, see David Graeber, "The New Anarchists," *New Left Review* 13 (January–February, 2002); Benjamin Shepard and Ronald Hayduk, eds., *From Act Up to the WTO: Urban Protest and Community Building in the Era of Globalization* (London: Verso, 2002); and Sean M. Sheehan, *Anarchism* (London: Reaktion Books, Ltd., 2003). For examples of online Anarchists websites and publications, see, for example, www.uk.indymedia.org, www.akuk.com, or hardcopy magazines like the *Anarchist Review*, *The Raven*, or *Anarchist Studies*.

7. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, p. 14. Woodcock goes on to argue that the ideology became anti-statist because of the era in which it was developed, an era that saw the increasing centralization and growing power of the state and the statist world alongside a gradual trend in post-Medieval Europe toward an interest in the individual and, eventually, individual liberty. He draws a comparison

with rebellious ideologies of other eras, for example, Brutus and Spartacus, who took on other “enemies”—the threat of dictatorship and the liberation of slaves, respectively.

8. William Godwin, *Enquiry on Political Justice and Its Influence on Morals and Happiness* (London: Penguin Classics, 1976).

9. Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, David Leopold, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, 1995).

10. Kropotkin, *Modern Science and Anarchism* (Boston, MA: Elibron Classics, Adamant Media Corporation, 2006).

11. *Federalism, Socialism and anti-Theologism* (Mikhail Bakunin, available at <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archieve/backunin>).

12. The First International refers to the organization founded in 1864, aimed at uniting a variety of different left-wing political groups and trade union organizations that were based on the working class and class struggle.

13. For an overview of the relationship between Anarchism and nationalism see Michael Forman, *Nationalism and the International Labor Movement: The Idea of the Nation in Socialist and Anarchist Theory* (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), Carl Levy, “Anarchism, Internationalism and Nationalism in Europe, 1860–1939,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 50 (3) (2004), pp. 330–342, and Susan Milner, *The Dilemmas of Internationalism: French Syndicalism and the International Labour Movement, 1900–1914* (Oxford, Berg Publishers, 1990).

14. George R. Esenwein, “Anarchists in Government: The Paradox of the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939,” in Frances Lannon and Paul Preston, eds., *Elites and Power in 20th Century Spain 1936–1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 103–128), and Helen Graham, “‘Against the state’: A Genealogy of the Barcelona May days (1937),” *European History Quarterly*, 29(4) (1999), pp. 485–542.

15. Wayne Thorpe, “The European Syndicalists and War 1914–1918,” *Contemporary European History*, 10(4) (2001), pp. 1–24.

16. Another possible addition to this category is the occasional attempts to set up alternative financial systems or institutions. The idea of popular banking emerged in France in the 1850s, most significantly, with Proudhon’s support of the opening of a People’s Bank, and of initiating a system of mutualist exchange. Writing at the same time as Proudhon, the German Anarchist, Wilhelm Weitling, argued for the creation of a Bank of Exchange as the key to destroying the capitalist system and setting up a structure that would ultimately make political institutions unnecessary.

17. Pierre Vilar, *Spain, a Brief History* (trans. by Brian Tate) (Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1967, 1977).

18. Some efforts were made early on to limit this diversity, such as a proposal made during the First International, to restrict membership to manual workers—a proposal defeated by British trade-unionist representatives.

19. Stephen B. Whitaker, *The Anarchist-Individualist Origins of Italian Fascism* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), p. 37.

20. The relationship between artists and Anarchists in France has been highlighted, for example, in such books as Joan Halperin’s *Felix Feneon: Aesthete and Anarchist in Fin-de-Siecle Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), or Annemarie Springer’s article, “Terrorism and Anarchy: Late 19th-century Images of a Political Phenomenon in France,” *Art Journal*, 38(4) (Summer 1979), pp. 261–266.

21. Delegate from Cette.

22. Y. M. Stekloff, *History of the First International* (London, Martin Lawrence Ltd., 1928).

23. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, p. 225.

24. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, p. 100.

25. Tolstoy did not call himself an Anarchist because of the term’s connection to ideas of changing society through violence, but is commonly considered an Anarchist or Christian Anarchist. For his ideas on education, see L. Weiner, *Tolstoy on Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

26. Paul Avrich, *The Modern School Movement: Anarchism and Education in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980).
27. Michael P. Smith, *The Libertarians and Education* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1983).
28. Carolyn P. Boyd, "The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868–1909," *Journal of Modern History*, 48(4) (1975), pp. 171–189.
29. Mercedes Vilanova, "Anarchism, Political Participation, and Illiteracy in Barcelona between 1934 and 1936," *American Historical Review* (February 1992), pp. 96–119.
30. Among Proudhon's many books were: *What is Property? Avertissement aux propriétaires*, *System of Economic Contradictions: or, The Philosophy of Poverty*, *Les Confessions d'un Revolutionnaire*, *The General Idea of the Revolution in the 19th Century*, *De la justice dans la revolution et dans l'eglise*, and *De la capacite politique des classes ouvrieres*. Also see Stewart Edwards, ed., *Selected Writings of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon* (London: Macmillan, 1969).
31. See Martin A. Miller, ed., *Peter Kropotkin, Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution* (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1970).
32. Cited in Woodcock, *Anarchism*, p. 106.
33. H. Becker, "Notes on Freedom and the Freedom Press, 1886–1928," *The Raven*, 1(1) (1987), pp. 4–24.
34. As established at the "purely Anarchist" Verviers Congress of 1877.
35. The Syndicalist issue was one of the leading questions of debate at the Amsterdam Congress in 1907.
36. See the quote by an Anarchist about the lack of "any contact, public or secret, between them" in Joll, *The Anarchists*, p. 124.
37. Joseph Dejacque, *L'Humanisphere* (Paris, Le libertine, Journal de Movement Social, 1899).
38. Cited in Woodcock, *Anarchism*, p. 276.
39. For an interesting comparison on British reluctance to pass similar laws, see Jensen R. Bach, "The International Anti-Anarchist Conference of 1898 and the Origins of Interpol," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 16(2) (1981), pp. 310–329.
40. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, p. 397.
41. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, p. 150.
42. T. R. Ravindranathan, *Bakunin and the Italians* (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press 1988), pp. 11–56.
43. Levy, "Anarchism, Internationalism and Nationalism in Europe, 1860–1939," p. 342.
44. For details on the effects of the Haymarket riots and killings of Sacco and Vanzetti, see books by the leading writer on American Anarchists, Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984) and *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).
45. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, p. 369.
46. For more on the challenges of internationalism in the Anarchist case see Milner, *Dilemmas of Internationalism* and S. Milner, "The International Labour Movement and the Limits of Internationalism: The International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres, 1901–1913," *International Review of Social History*, 33 (1988), pp. 1–24. Jolyon Howorth, "French Workers and German Workers: The Impossibility of Internationalism, 1900–1914," *European History Quarterly*, 15 (1985), pp. 71–97.
47. The question has been asked by those studying socialism and communism as well as Anarchism, for example, Eric Cahm and Vladimir C. Fisera, eds., *Socialism and Nationalism* (Nottingham, Spokesman Books, 1978–1980), vols. 1–3; M. Forman, *Nationalism and the International Labor Movement. The Idea of the Nation in Socialist and Anarchist Theory* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).
48. International Bulletin of the Syndicalist Movement, no. 12, 1909.
49. Hermia Olivier, *The International Anarchist Movement in Late Victorian London* (London: Croom Helm, 1983). She also attributes the failure in part to xenophobia, obviously not a good sign for the "internationalism" of the movement.
50. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, p. 226.